Rail Terminology

286,000 Pound Rail – Rail track segments with a gross rail load of 286,000 lbs. or 143-ton car capacity restrictions.

Track Structure

In simple terms, track structure determines loading capacity and the speed of movement of train running over it. The four primary variables (rail, ties ballast and grade) can be enhanced to gain exponential increases in capability and capacity. For example, track with 80 lb rail, softwood ties, pit run ballast and a "silt mix" grade would probably be capable of 180 – 220,000 lb car loading with a maximum track speed of 15-25 mph, where track with 136 lb rail, concrete ties, crushed rock ballast and a soil cement/ gravel grade that was three feet thick would be capable of 286,000 lb loading at speeds of up to 55mph

AMTRAK – Government-owned passenger railroad, established in 1971.

Ballast – Material (crushed stone) selected for placement on the roadbed for the purpose of holding the track in place.

Budd Cars – Budd Rail Diesel Car - classic North American streamlined self-propelled passenger rail car (aka Diesel Multiple Unit/DMU) built by the Budd company of Philadelphia between 1949 and 1962. Many of these cars provided passenger service in rural areas where they were cheaper to operate than locomotive power trains. A handful of the Budd RDCs survive and continue to operate.

Capital Costs – Non-recurring costs required to construct (or improve) the rail line. Capital costs include the purchase of locomotives, passenger cars, construction or rehabilitation of stations, and the design and administrative costs associated with these improvements.

Class of Track – Operating speed limits on main lines.

	Freight	*Passenger*
Class 1 Track	*10 mph*	*15 mph*
Class 2 Track	*25 mph*	*30 mph*
Class 3 Track	*40 mph*	*60 mph*
Class 4 Track	*60 mph*	*80 mph*
Class 5 Track	*80 mph*	*90 mph*

Class I Railroad – Any rail-road company in the U.S. and in Mexico that has an annual operating revenue of over $319.3 million (USD) in 2006, as defined by the Surface Transportation Board. (e.g. Canadian National, Norfolk Southern, Union Pacific)

Class II Railroad – Any rail-road company in the U.S. and in Mexico that has an annual operating revenue between $20.5 million and $319.2 million.

Class III Railroad – A railroad with average annual gross revenue under $20.5 million for three years in a row. The Class III railroads in US are normally the short line railroads that serve a limited area.

Commuter Rail – A transit mode that is an electric or diesel propelled railway for urban passenger train service consisting of local short distance travel operating between a central city and adjacent suburbs.

Continuous Welded Rail – Rails welded together in lengths of 400 feet or more

DMU – Diesel Multiple Units – the generic term for a diesel-powered train where a separate locomotive is not required because the traction system is contained under various cars in the train. Self propelled passenger cars. DMU can run as single units or they can be connected together depending on ridership.

Double Stack – An intermodal railcar capable of having one container stacked on another container for better ride quality and car utilization.

Excursion Rail – Tourist railroad operated solely for recreational and amusement purposes.

FRA – Federal Railroad Administration

Gauge – distance between rails, standard gauge in U.S.A. is 56 1/2 inches (4' 8 ½") as measured inside to inside

Grade Crossing – rail crossings that intersect with road or street crossings at the same level.

High-Speed Rail – Systems of rolling stock and infrastructure which regularly operate at or above 250 km/h on new tracks, or 200 km/h on existing tracks. A definitive aspect is the use of continuous welded rail which reduces track vibrations and discrepancies between rail segments enough to allow trains to pass at speeds in excess of 200 km/h. Curve radius will often be the ultimate limiting factor in a train's speed

Intercity (Passenger) Rail – Service connecting central city to central city on a railroad right-of-way in densely traveled corridors. Amtrak's *ACELA* service between Washington, DC and Boston is a well-known example of higher-speed intercity rail.

Intermodal – The use and connection of different types of transportation modes to move freight shipments and people, i.e., ships, trains, buses, and trucks. Also known as Multi-modal.

Junction (JCT) – The convergence of two or more railroad lines. Typically a Junction is a Controlled Point (a location where switches or signals are remotely controlled by a control operator (dispatcher)) as well.

Light Rail – Carries a light volume of traffic. "Light" refers to the number of riders that the train can carry, not the weight. Light rail may share right-of-way on a roadway or operate on exclusive right-of-way and can have multi-car trains or single cars.

Main Line – Primary rail line over which trains operate between terminals. It excludes sidings, and yard and industry tracks.

Milepost – A post or sign on pole each mile along the track that shows the distance from a predefined location such as a major rail terminal.

Operating Costs – Recurring costs of operating passenger service. These costs include wages, maintenance of facilities and equipment, fuel, supplies, employee benefits, insurance, taxes, marketing, and other administrative costs.

Port of Entry – A port at which foreign goods are admitted into the receiving country.

Railroad Tie – The part of the track, often wood or concrete, where the rails are spiked or otherwise fastened.

Ridership – The number of people carried by the passenger train during a specified period.

Road Bed – The foundation on which the rails and ties of a railroad are placed.

Rolling Stock – Train cars or coaches.

Short Haul – Short move that is usually under 1000 miles. Process by which an interchange carrier changes gateways to shorten the distance of the move for the other interchange carriers and hence reduce revenues paid to them.

Short Line Railroad – Small railroad that originates or terminates traffic and participates in division of revenue. It is usually less than 100 miles in length. It is usually affiliated with or sold by a major railroad. (e.g. St. Lawrence & Atlantic Railroad)

Siding – An auxiliary track located next to a main line that allows a train to move out of the way of an oncoming train. Sidings are also used to store trains or to add/subtract rail cars.

Spur Track – A track extending out from the main track that is usually used to serve rail customers.

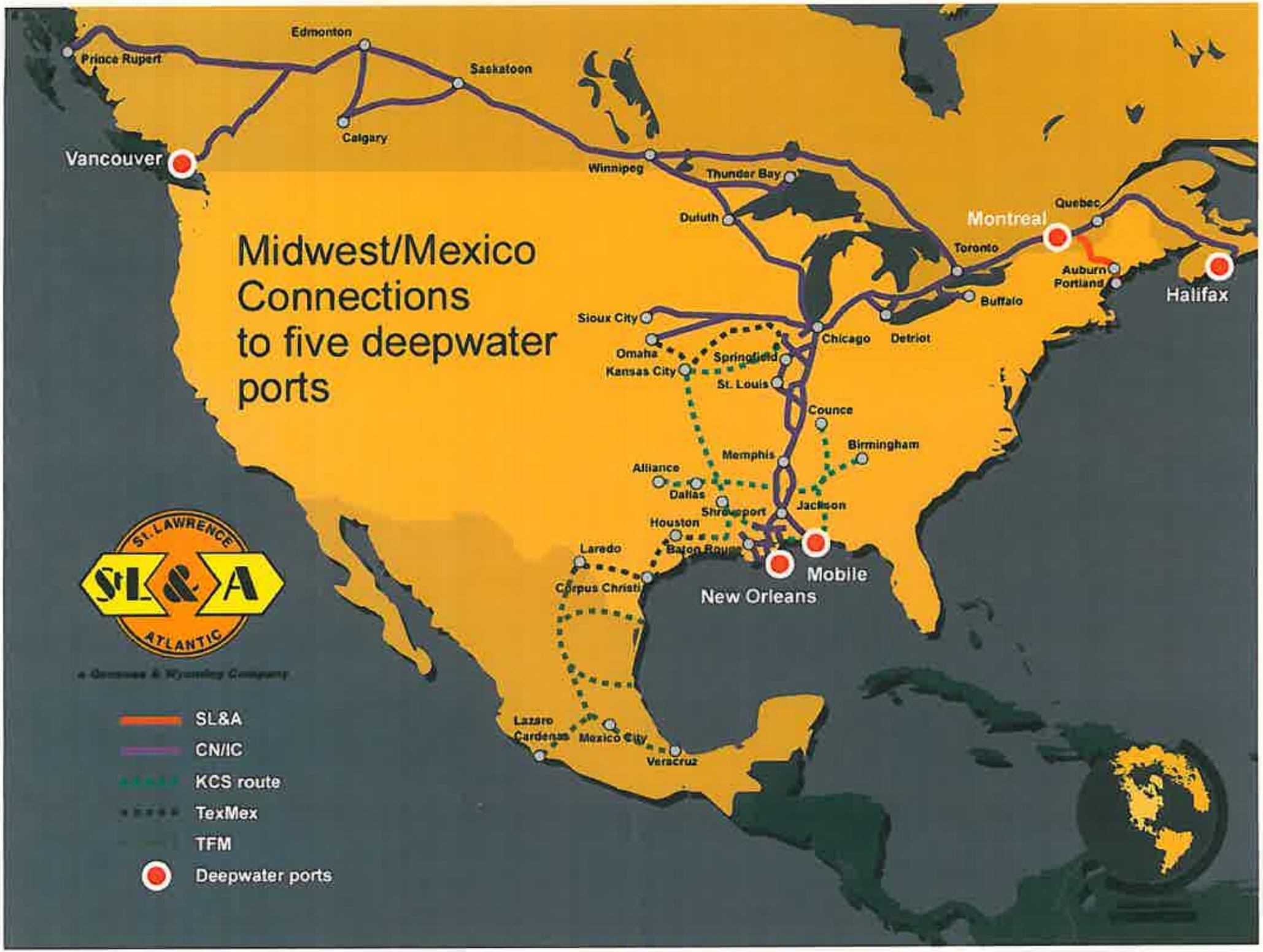
Tariff – A published schedule showing rates, fares, charges, classification of freight, rules, and regulations applying to various kinds of transportation and incidental services.

Terminal – Facilities provided by a railroad at a terminus or at any intermediate point on its line for the handling of passengers or freight, and for the breaking up, making up, forwarding and servicing trains, and interchanging with other carriers.

Ton-mile – The movement of one ton of freight one mile

Track – The space between the rails and space of not less than 4 feet outside of each rail.

Travel Time – The elapsed time between a trip's beginning and end. It includes travel, transfers, and waiting time.


Midwest/Mexico
Connections
to five deepwater
ports
Edmonton
Prince Rupert
Saskatoon
Calgary
Vancouver
Winnipeg
Thunder Bay
Duluth
Quebec
Montreal
Toronto
Auburn
Portland
Halifax
Buffalo
Sioux City
Chicago
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Springfield
Kansas City
St. Louis
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Birmingham
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Laredo
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Mobile
Corpus Christi
New Orleans
Lazaro
Cardenas
Mexico City
Veracruz
ST. LAWRENCE
SL&A
ATLANTIC
SL&A
CN/IC
KCS route
TexMex
TFM
Deepwater ports

Pan Am System Map